

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-01

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R 200035Z MAY 75

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5054

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

UNCLAS HONG KONG 5452

FOLLOWING MSG SENT ACTION USDA/FAS WASHDC 16 MAY 75

BEING REPEATED TO YOU

QUOTE

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TOFAS 85

FOR: FCA, GRAIN AND FEED DIVISION, NOVOTNY

FROM: AGRICULTURAL OFFICER

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, CH

SUBJECT: PROSPECTS FOR PRC'S 1975 CROP APPEAR HIGHLY FAVORABLE

REF: TOFAS 181 DTD NOV 15, 1974

BEGIN SUMMARY: CURRENT OUTLOOK FOR CHINA'S WINTER GRAIN AND RAPE HAR

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VEST ON SLIGHTLY LARGER AREA THAN LAST YEAR NOW APPEARS GOOD DESPITE
UNFAVORABLE WEATHER CONDITIONS EARLIER THIS YEAR. SOWINGS OF BOTH
WINTER AND SPRING WHEAT HAVE INCREASED AND ALL INDICATIONS, AS OF NOW

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POINT TO ANOTHER GOOD WHEAT HARVEST THIS YEAR. TRANSPLANTING OF EARL

Y

RICE IS NOW COMPLETED, ALTHOUGH EXCESSIVE RAINS CAUSED PROBLEMS IN SOME AREAS DURING TRANSPLANTING. SOWING OF CORN, KAOLIANG AND MILLET S, NOW UNDERWAY IN NORTH, HAVE PROBABLY BEEN EXPANDED AS RESULT OF TIMELY MID-APRIL RAINS.

END SUMMARY.

1. WINTER CROPS: ACCORDING TO RECENT PRESS REPORTS, CURRENT OUTLOOK FOR CHINA'S WINTER GRAIN AND RAPE HARVEST ON SLIGHTLY LARGER AREA (133,000 HECTARES) THAN LAST YEAR APPEARS GOOD DESPITE UNFAVORABLE WEATHER CONDITIONS DURING PART OF THE GROWING SEASON IN SOME PARTS OF NORTHERN CHINA IN PARTICULAR. ALTHOUGH CONDITIONS NORTH OF HUAI RIVER HAD BEEN DRY SINCE GROWTH RESUMED AFTER WINTER DORMANCY, INCLUDING FIVE OF CHINA'S LEADING WINTER WHEAT GROWING PROVINCES--HONAN, SHANTUNG, HOPEH, SHENSI AND SHANSI (WITH CLOSE TO HALF OF CHINA'S TOTAL WHEAT AREA), SPRING RAINS SINCE MID-APRIL HAVE IMPROVED CROP CONDITIONS IN MOST OF THE AFFECTED AREAS. EXCEPTION IS HOPEH (INCLUDING PEKING AND TIENTSIN) WHICH STILL "COMBATTING DROUGHT".

2. SOUTH OF HUAI RIVER, PRECIPITATION AND CLOUDY WEATHER HAVE BOTH BEEN ABOVE NORMAL. SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED WERE KIANGSU PROVINCE AND SHANGHAI WHERE DRAINAGE DITCH EXPANSION WAS UNDERWAY TO RELIEVE AND PREVENT WATER-LOGGING OF CROP FIELDS. IN SPITE OF DIFFICULTIES, WINTER WHEAT IN YANGTZE REGION NOW IN FILLING STAGE WITH "BUMPER HARVEST IN SIGHT".

3. FURTHER SOUTH, WINTER CROPS WERE GENERALLY IN BY EARLY MAY AND WITH GOOD RESULTS. FUKIEN, FOR EXAMPLE, ALTHOUGH NOT A MAJOR WHEAT PROVINCE, INCREASED SOWN AREA OF WINTER WHEAT AND BARLEY BY 13 PERCENT TO 225,000 HECTARES AND INCREASED OUTPUT BY MORE THAN 10 PERCENT OVER 1973-74. KWANGTUNG ACHIEVED OVERALL 20-PERCENT INCREASE IN WHEAT (NOT A MAJOR CROP) AND SWEET POTATOES (LARGER CROP), IN PART AS RESULT OF WOSN AREA INCREASES FOR BOTH CROPS. IN SOUTHWEST, RECORD WINTER CROP PRODUCTION IN YUNNAN EXCEEDED LAST YEAR'S BY 30 PERCENT. (YUNNAN ALSO IS NOT MAJOR WINTER WHEAT PROVINCE, HOWEVER).

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4. COMMENT (WINTER CROP): MAY PRESS RELEASES ARE FIRST REPORTS ON CHINA'S WINTER WHEAT CROP (OUTSIDE OF SCATTERED ITEMS AT PROVINCIAL OR LO234)3;3)) SINCE REPORT ON COMPLETION OF WHEAT PLANTING (SEE REF TOFAS). SOWN AREA OF WINTER WHEAT IN NORTH REPORTEDLY INCREASED BY 400,000 HA. WHICH EARLIER LED TO ASSUMPTION THAT SOWN AREA IN SOUTH WOULD ALSO INCREASE. EXAMPLES OF KWANGTUNG AND YUNNAN (ABOVE) INDICATE THAT WINTER WHEAT AREA IN SOUTH PROBABLY ALSO EXPANDED. APPARENT PROBLEM OF RECONCILING (A)

MODEST INCREASE OF ONLY 133,000 HECTARES OF "WINTER WHEAT" EXPECTED TO EXCEED HALF-MILLION HECTARES, IMPLIES THAT WINTER WHEAT HAS EXPANDED AT EXPENSE OF OTHER WINTER "GRAIN" CROPS--MOST PROBABLY FIELD PEAS AND BROAD BEANS, AND PERHAPS SOME BARLEY. RAPE, MAJOR NON-GRAIN WINTER CROP, ALSO REPORTEDLY HAS INCREASED IN AREA.

5. WHILE EXPANDED SOWINGS OF WHEAT APPEAR IN PART RESPONSIBLE FOR PROBABLE INCREASED WINTER WHEAT PRODUCTION THIS YEAR, THE 12- TO 13-PERCENT INCREASE IN WINTER WHEAT AREAS UNDER IRRIGATION (TO 5.3 MILLION HECTARES) IN FIVE MAJOR WHEAT PROVINCES NAMED IN PARA. 1, ABOVE, MUST HAVE PLAYED IMPORTANT ROLE IN OFFSETTING DRY WEATHER CONDITIONS, PROBABLY PREVENTING LOSSES WHICH WOULD HAVE RESULTED A FEW YEARS AGO WITH MUCH SMALLER "IRRIGATION INSURANCE".

6. A MORE FAVORABLE VIEW OF WEATHER CONDITIONS IN CHINA'S WINTER WHEAT GROWING REGIONS DURING FIRST QUARTER OF 1975 IS DERIVED FROM HONG KONG ROYAL OBSERVATORY DATA WHICH INDICATE (A) THAT PRECIPITATION IN NORTH WAS ONLY 10-20 PERCENT BELOW NORMAL (WHICH WE DO NOT CONSIDER CRITICALLY DRY) AND (B) THAT RAINFALL IN SOUTH WAS ONLY MODERATELY HEAVIER THAN LONG-TERM AVERAGE. ADDING IN BENEFICIAL SPRING RAIN FACTOR (PARA. 1, ABOVE), OVERALL WEATHER CONDITIONS FOR WINTER GRAINS (INCLUDING WHEAT) APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN BETTER THAN NORMAL, WITH POSSIBLE ADVERSE EFFECTS ON YIELDS LIMITED PRIMARILY TO SOUTH WHICH IS NOT MAJOR WINTER GRAIN AREA.

7. IN SUM, FAVORABLE FACTORS (EXPANDED IRRIGATION AND LIMITED EFFECTS OF DROUGHT, EXPANDED SOWINGS, INCREASED APPLICATIONS OF FERTILIZER AND CUMULATIVE EFFECTS OF LARGE-SCALE AGRICULTURAL CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION EFFORTS--HIGHLY INTENSIFIED THIS PAST WINTER) INDICATE THAT WINTER GRAIN HARVEST PROSPECTS THIS YEAR ARE BETTER THAN IN 1974. WHEN COMBINED WITH FRAGMENTARY REPORTS FROM ALREADY-UNCLASSIFIED

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HARVESTED AREAS, DISTINCT POSSIBILITY OF RECORD WHEAT PRODUCTION IN 1975 IS SUGGESTED.

8. SPRING PLANTING. SOWING COMPLETED IN SIX OF CHINA'S 11-12 SPRING-WHEAT GROWING PROVINCES ACCOUNTING FOR 60-65 PERCENT OF SOME 4.0 TO 4.5 MILLION HECTARES UNDER THAT CROP. PLANTING WAS EXPANDED BY 7 PERCENT TO 1,870,000 HECTARES IN HEILUNGKIANG, CHINA'S LEADING SPRING WHEAT PROVINCE, AND EXPANDED BY 20 PERCENT IN KIRIN, A LESS IMPORTANT PROVINCE.

9. EARLY RICE TRANSPLANTING IS ALSO COMPLETED IN CHINA ALTHOUGH RAINS AND COOL WEATHER CREATED DIFFICULTIES DURING TRANSPLANTING IN CHEKIANG PROVINCE AND POSSIBLY ADJACENT AREAS. IN NORTH, WHERE BULK OF CHINA'S CORN, KAOLIANG AND MILLETS ARE GROWN, PLANTING IS IN FULL SWING AIDED BY THE MID-APRIL RAINS.

10. COMMENT: NCNA REPORT OF MAY 8 REFLECTED OPTIMISIM OVER PROSPECTS FOR 1975 HARVEST. AMONG CONTRIBUTING FACTORS WOULD BE PROBABLE INCREASE IN SPRING WHEAT AREA OF APPROXIMATELY 10 PERCENT. OUTSIDE OF ABOVE REPORTED DIFFICULTIES IN EARLY RICE TRANSPLANTING, LARGE SECTORS OF YANGTZE DOUBLE-CROPPED RICE REGION WERE PROBABLY NOT SERIOUSLY AFFECTED (OR WERE LITTLE AFFECTED) BY ADVERSE WEATHER. WITH PROBABLE INCREASE IN AREA PLANTED TO CORN, KAOLIANG AND MILLETS MADE POSSIBLE BY SPRING RAINS, ALNG WITH FACTORS NOTED ABOVE, PROSPECTS FOR CHINA'S 1975 CROP APPEAR GOOD THUS FAR.

11. STRENGTHENING THAT PRELIMINARY AND TENTATIVE ASSESSMENT IS ADDITIONAL COMPONENT OF PRODUCTION INPUTS WHICH HAVE SHOWN STEADY INCREASE AND IMPROVEMENT IN PAST FEW YEARS IN PARTICULAR. FOR EXAMPLE, SHARPLY STEPPED-UP EFFORT OF PAST WINTER RESULTED IN FOLLOWING ACCOMPLISHMENTS: (A) 10 BILLION CUBIC METERS OF EARTH-WORK AND STONE WORK COMPLETED; (B) 2.7 MILLION HECTARES OF NEW OR IMPROVED IRRIGATION FACILITIES; (C) 5 MILLION HECTARES OF CROPLAND LEVELED; (D) 9.3 MILLION HECTARES DEEP-PLOWED; AND (E) 933,000 HECTARES TERRACED--RESULTS THAT FAR EXCEEDED THOSE OF ANY PREVIOUS YEAR. ALSO, A NUMBER OF PROVINCES REPORTED INCREASED AVAILABILITY OF FERTILIZER FOR SPRING PLANTING. ALTOGETHER, THE OUTLOOK CAN ONLY BE CONSIDERED FAVORABLE FOR CHINA'S CROP PRODUCTION THIS YEAR.

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